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THE GREAT ALASKAN WOODEN TOKEN EXPEDITION

by David Phillips

Part 1

On June 26, 2009, my wife Betty and I embarked on a vacation. Our plan was to fly from Vancouver, B.C. to Whitehorse, Yukon, rent a car and spend the next three weeks driving a rough triangle through Yukon and Alaska, returning to Whitehorse to fly back to Vancouver on July 17, 2009. This we did!! With many side trips to “out of the way” towns, driving a total of 3652 miles.

Some general observations on our trip:

- Gorgeous weather, hot and sunny.
- Magnificent scenery
- Very helpful people

The object of our trip was three fold:

- To visit friends we have made over the years
- To enjoy the immensity of the north country
- To try and acquire wooden tokens to add to a collection I had started 9 years ago.

This travelogue will primarily be about wooden tokens: found and not found, the originating place/business still in business or not, still issuing woods or not, new issuers of woods and/or “stories” about wooden tokens in general.

We flew into Whitehorse, picked up our rental car and immediately left for Faro, Yukon. This is a town celebrating its 40th anniversary. It was an instant town created to service the nearby lead zinc mine. No wooden tokens were here, but I was able to acquire some Elks Club plastic tokens for a friend who collects Yukon Numismatica (ed. note - Thanks Dave!).

Next day, off up the road to Mayo, Yukon, another small town. Again, no woods, but I was able to acquire a 100th anniversary bimetal \$5 municipal trade coin from 2003 for my friend.



The next day, up the road again to Dawson City, for a two night stay. Searched diligently for tokens of all types, but was only able to acquire one metal slot machine token from Diamond Tooth Gerties Casino.

After Dawson we crossed the Yukon River and drove westerly across the Top of the World Highway (a short highway with spectacular vistas of huge valleys and enor-

Continued on page 66

EDITOR'S COMMENTS

It is pretty obvious that a really big thank you is due to David Phillips, not only for his articles, but for supplying your editor with a few goodies from Yukon for his collection. It is hard to believe that the 2003 \$5 trade coin from Mayo has been hiding for six years!

We will be continuing Dave's journey in the next few issues, to Fairbanks, down to Anchorage and back to Whitehorse via Haines, Alaska.

There were three tokens breaking the \$1,000 barrier this month. These were from Gambier Bay, Klawock and Valdez. Otherwise, it was a pretty slow month for Alaska tokens. Many AYPE pieces went unsold, either because of lack of interest, or opening bids set too high. See Prices Realized in the next column.

I was waiting on a customer and looked up to see someone else walk into the store. Ken Rieck came up for his summer trip to Fairbanks. I met his friend that is supplying all the tokens from fishing ports, and expressed my and your thanks for his providing these tokens from really out of the way places. Without help like this, these would likely go unrecorded.

Ken has been a great help these last few years. He has provide innumerable items "For the Record." We need some one like him in southeast Alaska. Any takers? We pay really well - free newsletter. Be sure to declare that on your 1040!

Summer has come to an end. We had our first frost a week or so ago. After setting records in July, with the hottest and driest summer month ever, we have already set some record lows in a couple places in the interior where they keep weather records.

I have endured my first summer of not playing baseball. I need rotator cuff surgery. But, it seems the only time my shoulder hurts is when I throw a baseball. So, no surgery for now. And no baseball.

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PRICES REALIZED

Selected prices realized from eBay:

Cordova , Breedman, 6¼¢, B-5a	150.00OB
Fairbanks , Eagle Cigar Store J&B, 25¢, B-14c	76.00
Fairbanks , Model Bakery, 5 for \$1, B-36a	197.50
Gambier Bay , Hoonah Pkg., 50¢, B-1c	1,136.11
Juneau , Occidental, 12½¢, B-56c	86.00



Klawock, NPT&P Co., 10¢, unlisted (size unreported)

	1,236.58
Koyukuk , Vernetti, 25¢, B-3b	75.00OB
Nebesna , Nebesna Trd. Co., \$1, B-1a	95.00OB
(Nome) , One Lead Pencil, B-2a	OB95.00NB
Nome , Columbia, 1 Drink, B-17a	175.00OB
Sitka , Witz, 5¢, B-17a	60.00OB
Valdez , Bohemian Saloon, 12½¢, B-3a	1,180.00
Valdez , The Fairbanks, 6¼¢, B-6a	OB350.00NB
Yukokaket , Lewis, 12½¢, B-1a	OB250.00NB
Dawson, YT , B&M, 12½¢	73.13
AYPE , ¼ DWT	OB199.00NB
AYPE , ½ DWT	OB199.00NB
AYPE , ½ DWT, NGC Pr-66	899.00OB**
AYPE , 1 DWT	117.50
AYPE , 1 DWT	OB375.00NB
AYPE , 1 DWT, NGC-64	OB699.00NB
AYPE , 1 DWT	OB299.00NB
Alaska Gold , Two TooWah, Gilt brass, NGC-62	203.51
Klondike Charm , stick pin	160.49
Russian American Company , 25 Kopeks note	14,950.00

** - Mike Locke writes: "NGC assures me that the grade assignment is "a mechanical error"."

OB = Opening Bid NB = No Bid RL = relist R = Reserve
RNM = Reserve Not Met W = withdrawn BIN = Buy it now
DNS = Did Not Sell FTR = see For the Record

Alaskan Token Collector & Polar Numismatist, published 10 times per year, is a publication of Alaska Rare Coins. All articles remain the property of the authors and may not be reprinted without their consent.

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WOOD EXPEDITION, CONT.

mous landscapes) to the Alaska border. We passed through customs quickly and shortly turned north and drove the one way in and out, narrow, winding road to Eagle, Alaska. No tokens in this tiny village. However we did witness the extensive damage done to this Yukon River village when a spring ice jam caused huge blocks of ice to climb up the river bank and demolish anything in their path (8 homes and many other shore-side buildings, not to mention docks, boats and vehicles, plus all shore-side vegetation)! Flooding inland of the ice caused further damage to many buildings a block inland from the river. What a lot of damage.

We drove out and then some before stopping briefly in Chicken, Alaska. I love this story - allegedly this gold strike camp, in the early 1900s, was going to be named "Ptarmigan," after the plentiful birds found in the area. But none of the miners knew how to spell ptarmigan, so they settled on Chicken instead!



One of the two tourist destinations has a cluster of enterprises owned by the same entrepreneur, e.g.; a gift shop, a saloon and a restaurant. I found three wooden tokens in the gift shop. These had been used as drink tokens in the Saloon (but no more), and, as such, two were painted red or blue on the edges. Since the owner was busy with a tour bus of "touristas" I was unable to determine the exact use of each colour, but would suspect "clear" edge (beer), red edge (call or well drink), blue edge (premium drink) or some such combination.

We drove on to Tok for the night. I found one new wood at the Tok Westmark Hotel. It was for a promo a couple of years ago, but was withdrawn after a short run.

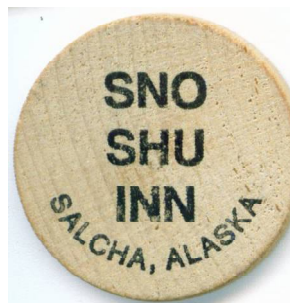


The next day, up the Alaska Highway now, checking out the Mountain House Lodge, previously the Cherokee Lodge (which did issue a wooden token "away back when"). The Mountain House Lodge 10 minutes south of Delta Junction was closed and very obviously out of business, so no luck there.

On to Delta Junction where upon checking for two previous wooden token issuers (Art's Trading Post and Wind Tunnel Lounge). I found that Art's was now an on again and off again store, and at the time of my visit was off again! The Wind Tunnel was not remembered by those I talked with.



I did pick up a new wood from the Buffalo Center Drive In. This new wood now incorporates the word "Center" in it's business name.



On up the road with a brief stop at Salcha, firstly at the Sno Shu Inn to see what's new. I found the Inn now uses plastic, however the proprietor found for me one of the last of their woods, which turned out to be one that I did not know about or have. It is for a well drink.

WOOD EXPEDITION, CONT.

I found out that the Salchaket Homestead no longer uses woods and has not done so for a long time.

We continued up the road to the town of North Pole where we overnighted. Prior to retiring for the night, and the next morning before leaving, I managed to find four new woods.



American Legion Post #30 (just southeast of North Pole) is located in the area known as Moose Creek.



Speedway Inn is just northwest of North Pole. This wood was used by the Speedway Inn before it was bought out and became part of a group of five area



bars owned by the same person.

The next two woods are used by the Speedway and four other bars, three of which are actually further up the Alaska Highway in Fairbanks (Manchu, Los Amigos and Lower LA).

I tried to find The Kloset, and the VFW Post 10029. The Kloset no longer is in business and nobody I talked to could remember what or where it was. The VFW Post was closed until after we were to leave town. So no luck with these two outfits.

I was also trying to find for myself any 50th Anniversary of Alaska Statehood commemorative tokens or medallions. I was quite surprised to find there was no such item available. However, I did find out that the City of North Pole has a medal on order, with delivery soon....

To be continued next issue - on to Fairbanks

ANCHORAGE MUSEUM “GOLD” TOKEN



A gold exhibit was the first exhibit in the newly expanded Anchorage Museum (opened May 30, 2009). Wells Fargo is a longtime sponsor of the museum, and was the sponsor of the “Gold” exhibit and of the opening day.

A special gold colored token was issued to note this event, featuring the logo of Wells Fargo, and the new logo of the Anchorage Museum at Rasmuson Center. These tokens were given away on opening day and also to children who completed a workbook during their gallery tour. A total of 25,000 tokens was produced by the Hoffman Mint. It is brass, 25mm

Our thanks to Arby Williams of the Anchorage Museum and David Phillips for providing this information.

YUKON PAPER POTPOURRI

Candy Waugaman conducted the garage sale of the century a couple weeks ago. She was selling duplicates from her collection, and other items that belonged in a dumpster. All proceeds went to local charities, mostly of pioneer or historical in nature, and the local Food Bank. The sale raised over \$18,000.

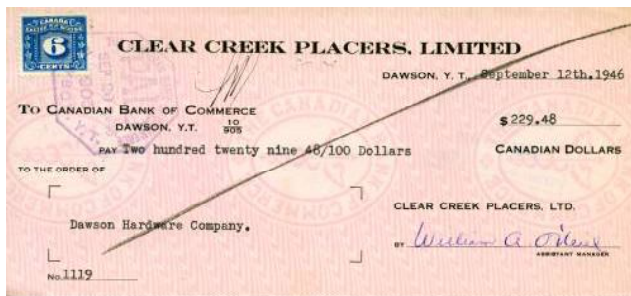
Frankly, the quantity of stuff was overwhelming, and I did not spend a lot of time searching through the thousands of post cards and photos. I went back at the end of the sale, and purchased a stack of Yukon checks which I thought some of you might find of interest. All are from the 40s and 50s. Most are about 213mm by 100mm, though a couple are slightly smaller.



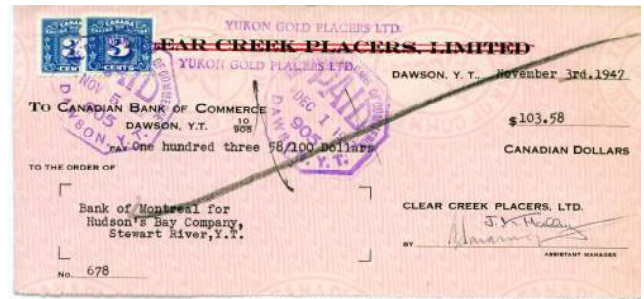
The “odd duck” is Yukon Alluvial Golds, Limited. I suspect that it is some how related to the others, but really can’t say.



This is the first of the Clear Creek Placers Limited checks. It is a counter check with the name of the company rubber stamped above the signature dated April 2, 1945.



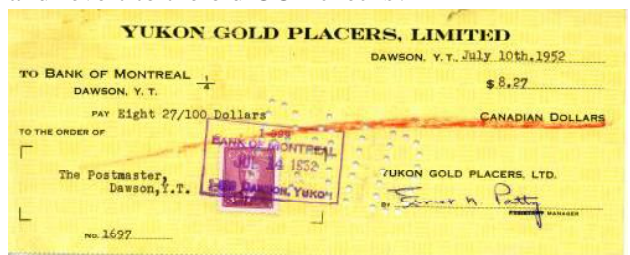
**The next is a printed Clear Creek Placers check. It is dated September 12, 1946.



At some point after this date, Clear Creek Placers became Yukon Gold Placers, Limited, as is shown by this check crossing out the original name and rubber stamping the new one above and below. It is dated November 3, 1947, and is number 678.



**Interestingly, this check carries the same date as the check above, but is number 677, and carries the new business name. Did YGP just run out of new checks and revert to the old CCP checks?



**Finally, this is the last of the checks. Until now, all checks have been on the Canadian Bank of Commerce. This check is on the Bank of Montreal and is dated July 10, 1952. It is signed by Ernest N. Patty, a future president of the University of Alaska. The Physical Education building at UAF is named for him. Not all of these checks are signed by Patty.

We have samples of the three checks whose descriptions start with an **. They are \$6 for one of each, postpaid, or 10 of each for \$25, postpaid. You will not receive the checks illustrated, but checks of the same type. Some have a staple, some two holes at the top for binding. I will select the best available at the time of the order.

MILITARY CHALLENGE COINS



U.S. ARMY ALASKA: America's Arctic Warriors, Presented by the Command Sergeant Major. Red, white, blue, yellow, gold and green on gold metal. We may have shown this one before, but our index was not good enough to pick it up.



ALASKA NATIONAL GUARD: Alaska Department of Military and Veterans Affairs. Bronze.



ALASKA: 2nd Maintenance Company (TMDE). White, black and red on bronze.



EIELSON A.F.B.: 3rd Logistics Readiness Squadron. Blue, yellow, white and red on bronze.



EIELSON A.F.B.: 18th AMU, Farthest F.... North Aircraft Maintenance Unit, We knock it off at 40 below. Russian lettering on the reverse. Red, white, blue, black, green and yellow on silver.



EIELSON A.F.B.: 345th Logistics Readiness Squadron. Red, white, dark blue, light blue and yellow on brass? The illustration is not good, and all is not readable. There is also a 354th LRS that was at Eielson.



EIELSON A.F.B.: Operation red Flag, Ready to go at 50 below. Another poor illustration. Red, white and yellow on silver.



EIELSON A.F.B.: 2002 Air Force Ball, 55th Anniversary, 1947, when the future began. Red, white, light blue, dark blue, yellow, green and black on silver, 45mm

FOR THE RECORD



ANCHORAGE: St. Mary Lutheran Church, For Outstanding Service. Red, yellow and white on oxidized silver colored metal. Size not reported.



FAIRBANKS: Model Bakery, good for one loaf of bread, 5 for \$1.00. Listed, not illustrated PR 197.50 (submitted by Kaye Dethridge).



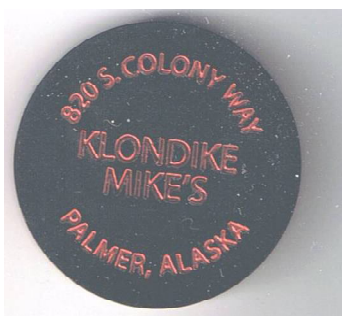
HAINES: Haines Elks 2634, probably a drink token. Gold on pink plastic, 41mm (submitted by Ken Rieck).



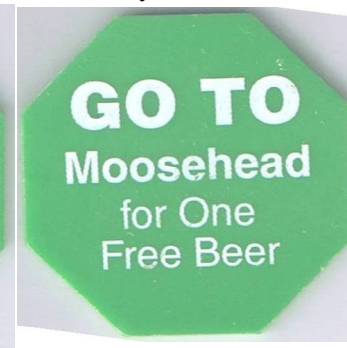
HAPPY VALLEY: Happy Valley Bar & Cafe, good for \$3.50. Black on bright, light green, 41mm (submitted by Ken Rieck).



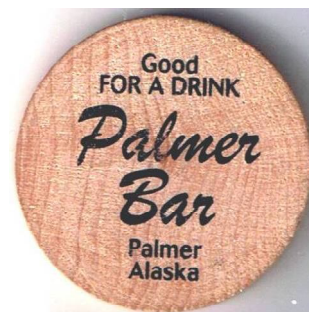
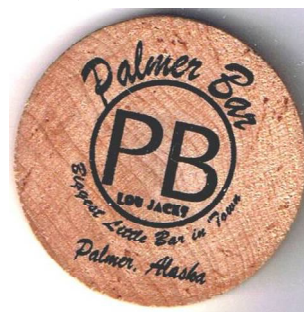
PALMER: American Legion Post 15, good for one free drink. White on red plastic, 42mm (submitted by Ken Rieck).



PALMER: Klondike Mike's, good for one drink. Metallic red on black, 38mm (submitted by Ken Rieck).



PALMER: Moosehead Saloon, One Free Beer. White on green octagonal plastic, 42mm (submitted by Ken Rieck).



PALMER: Palmer Bar, good for a drink. Black on wood (Submitted by Ken Rieck).

ALASKA 1 OZ. SILVER - \$25 each!

Plus \$5 postage
per order.



TRANS-ALASKAN PIPELINE MEDALS. COMPLETE SET - \$300. INDIVIDUAL MEDALS, NUMBERS 1 THROUGH 7 (1974 THROUGH 1976J), AND NUMBER 9 (1976D), \$25 EACH. NUMBERS 8, AND 10-12 AVAILABLE ONLY IN A COMPLETE SET. \$5 POSTAGE PER ORDER.

OUR NEW ONE OUNCE SILVER MEDAL WITH STATE QUARTER

We received our first shipment of our new silver medal, featuring the Alaska state quarter. The quarter is set into a depression in the medal and super glued in place.

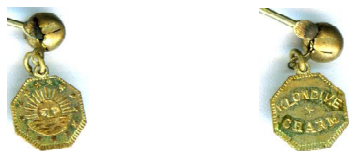
It carries the legend "49th State" and "The Last Frontier." The reverse is our standard Denali "Great Land" die.

We have made 100 of these. The next striking may be modified so that the wedges along the side of the quarter are frosty. We asked them to do that this time, but it did not get done.



Price is \$30 per medal, and \$5 for postage and handling per order.

THE “KLONDIKE CHARM”



The Klondike Charm first made our pages in 1990, also on a stick pin. Several have been on eBay within the last few years. It seems that about half are on stick pins.

The loop was an integral part of the charm. The denticles on both sides extend beyond what would be the edge of the rim to touch the loop. This could easily be trimmed away, and I suspect that this was done on those that are no longer attached to a stick pin.

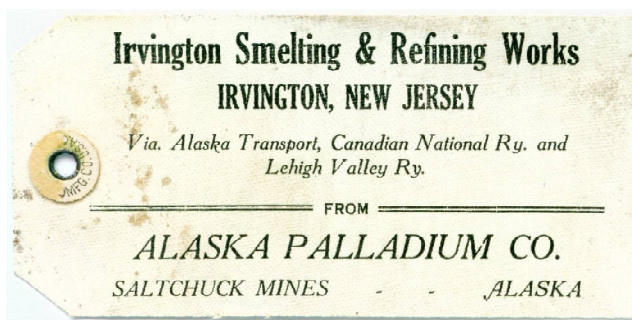
The example on Mike Locke’s page (<http://www.calgoldcoin.com/alaska.htm>) has a clashed die showing in the center of the reverse with the sun showing through. It also seems to have doubling on the star at 6:00 on the obverse as does this example.

It would be a great research project to check the Yukon newspapers and see if a jeweler was selling these. If so, this could be the only gold token with any true connection with Alaska or Yukon.

ALASKA PALLADIUM CO.

In a news report in the Fairbanks Daily News-Miner of July 22, the Salt Chuck mine may join the EPA’s superfund listing. The article provided the following historical information about the mine:

“The mine about 40miles northwest of Ketchikan opened in 1906 and was mined for copper, gold, palladium and platinum. Miners dumped waste rock in the intertidal zone. Major mining was finished by 1941.”



NEW GOLD TOKEN

Briefly mentioned last month, we have our latest gold token available.

The gold is from Ready Bullion Creek in Ester, about 10 miles west of Fairbanks. Reported fineness on this gold is .871.

These are priced at \$65 per token, plus \$3 postage, or \$5 postage for 2 or more.



Actual size above, enlarged below.

